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The CIA and Marriage

Marriage and the Central Intelligence Agency may not "go together, like a horse and carriage," but happily they will try. The CIA, you may have read, has recanted on its summary ousting of a former South Orange naval lieutenant, j.g., because he wed an alien.

Aside from the regulations, which frequently are stuffy things and devoid of logic, the CIA's performance, although pleasing in its second phase, has a bureaucratic tinge. Everyone is delighted indeed to have the young man back on the job, for with a wife waiting for him at home he needs a paycheck.

The whole episode has provided a fine batch of press clippings for her to paste in her scrap book, but any other positive purpose is obscured.

Personnel of the necessarily secretive and sensitive agency should be shielded from contamination by either aliens or Americans, if the contact might be detrimental. Ingenious blondes or other emissaries of a hostile power could contrive to extract information from the staff, which is conventional cloak-and-dagger practice.

In the instance of the young lieutenant the agency had possessed advance information of the alliance and reportedly had "investigated." If that inquiry uncovered a fragment of suspicion about the bride-to-be, dismissal of the lieutenant was mandatory. If, however, she had been cleared of foreign intrigue, the firing was an inept act. The reinstatement does appear to have been an exoneration.

The whole episode looks like a bungling most inappropriate to the CIA. It evoked critical attention to the agency at an inauspicious moment when numerous members of the Congress are threatening an inquiry. The effect of the performance in unfriendly countries cannot be measured, of course, but its exploitation can be conjectured.